



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Judiciary Committee
March 23, 2016

Testifying on SB 467
AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL IMPLEMENTATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA has concerns regarding SB 467, but we are happy to work with the committee on this issue.

Criminal background checks are a legitimate way for businesses, particularly small businesses, to screen job applicants. In fact, there are at least four bills (HB 5466, HB 5412, HB 5400 & HB 5306) proposed this session that preserve and expand the state's and municipalities' ability to use these background checks. Employers, both public and private, are under incredible pressure to ensure the safety of the workplace for employees. Criminal background checks are one tool utilized by businesses to ensure this safety. However, we also understand and support individuals that have learned from past mistakes and wish to reenter the workforce.

We do have concerns about SB 467, a few of which I will list below:

1. This language does not allow for an employer to ask about convictions once the interview process has begun. It also is silent regarding what happens if information regarding previous convictions is volunteered at the interview by the prospective employee.
2. This bill does not include language that preempts the few Connecticut municipalities that already have ban the box laws. Uniformity of these laws are critical for businesses – particularly those businesses with multiple locations.
3. This bill also does not take into account that some crimes should automatically exclude a person from a job in a particular industry, regardless of how long ago the crime occurred. For example, a person with repeated drunk driving convictions should rightfully be screened out from jobs requiring them to drive a vehicle.

Thank you for allowing us to testify on SB 467. We look forward to working with the committee on this issue.